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The Wholeness of the Church

by Howard Elmo Short

Reformation

Restoration

Renewal

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Christian Foundation Lectures

Reformation, Restoration and Renewal

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About the Author

Howard Elmo Short was born in Washington County, Indiana, U.S.A., near Salem, in 1907. Following graduation from the elementary school and two years of high school, he was graduated from the academy department of Johnson Bible College, Kimberlin Heights, Tennessee, in 1925. His Bachelor's degree was earned at Eureka College (Illinois), his B.D. (1932) and Ph.D. (1942) degrees in the Hartford (Connecticut) Seminary Foundation. As an Exchange Fellow of the Institute of International Education, he studied at the University of Marburg (Germany), 1932-33. Further study was done in Hartford and in the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology (Ohio) prior to receiving the doctorate. Post-doctrinal studies were carried out in the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies at Bossey, Switzerland, and in Union Theological Seminary, New York.

He was ordained to the ministry of the Disciples of Christ (Churches of Christ) in 1929, and served pastorates in Illinois, Massachusetts and Ohio. From 1942-1946 he was professor of philosophy and religion at Hiram College (Ohio). Since 1946, he has been professor of church history in The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky, a graduate theological seminary of the Disciples of Christ.

In 1952 he was a delegate to the Third World Conference on Faith and Order in Lund, Sweden. He was the first exchange professor of the World Council of Churches from America to the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies in Switzerland, in 1952. He also made a lecture tour of German Predigerseminaren the same year, under the auspices of the World Council. He is a member of the committe on women in the church of the National Council of Churches, U.S.A.; a trustee of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society and a member of the study committee of the World Convention of Churches of Christ. He has written: *Doctrine and Thought of the Disciples of Christ,* and *Christian Unity is Our Business.* He was a co-editor of the Disciples' *Response to Lund* and *Response to Evanston.* For six years he has written the weekly exposition of the International Uniform Sunday School Lesson, in the *Christian-Evangelist.*

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REFORMATION

The invitation to deliver the Christian Foundation lectures is a responsibility which I have accepted with pleasure and with a certain degree of apprehension. My chief study, in a research sense, has been in the sixteenth century. I am a minister of the Disciples of Christ, Churches of Christ, as they are known here, a group born as a Restoration Movement. My activity in the past decade has been divided between ecumenical interests and my own church with emphasis on cooperative work. Whether these three interests can be combined to produce a series of lectures of any value is the question which produces that apprehension.

In any case, these lectures on Reformation, Restoration and Renewal are the result of an effort to show the practical and possibly useful relationship between the interests. To the College of the Churches of Christ in Canada, the principal, and directors, and to Emmanuel College, I am grateful for this opportunity to think with you on matters of mutual concern to us all.

"On this rock I will build my church and the powers of death shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Thus our Lord replied when Peter responded to his earlier question by saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (verse 16). Peter, it seems, wondered, wandered and wavered until he found his rightful place in this church.

The succeeding generations have done little better. There is probably nothing that can be said about the church today that has not been said already. The topic has been divided and sub-divided. There is, for example, the question of the church "in the mind of Christ". Until our times, several modern scholars have wondered whether Jesus really used the word, "church". Then there is the relation between the New Testament *ecclesia* and the Old Testament *congregation.* And, there is the problem of the use of the word in the singular and in the plural. "Church" appears 74 times, in one Greek text, while "churches" is used 36 times. What is the organizational relation, if any, between the separate congregations, and in what sense is each one "the church"?

Recently a national radio program in the United States has been carrying a series of broadcasts by leading religious groups on the great leaders of their respective churches. One concerned Joseph Smith and another Martin Luther, while a Roman Catholic bishop spoke on their most famous leaders, St. Peter and St. Paul. Were these the two who fully comprehended Christ's meaning and have all Christians except the Roman Catholics departed from the true church?

As a final illustration of our own wondering and wandering, the current discussion concerning unity and uniformity can be cited. Must *a* church be uniform (like a private in the infantry) in organization, doctrine and discipline in order to be *the* church, or can the diversity of gifts be variously organized and expressed?

The lectures will not answer these questions. They are to be an historical presentation by a practising lecturer in the field of Church History. There will be an attempt made to portray some aspects of some of the attempts of the earthly church to be the church, at three different periods in history. The questions should remain in the not-too-distant background of our thinking all the time. Perhaps the

study of these three periods together can afford some helpful clues, so that we may wonder and waver a little less as we, the wandering people of God, go through our generation.

Reform is a common word in our language. This early in the new year no doubt many still remember certain resolutions made on New Year's day, to reform. Until recent years most correctional institutions in the United States were called reform schools. Presumably, the theory was, that one could be taught how to change his manner of living and thinking. At Hyde Park corner in London one can hear, among many other kinds of speakers, those who insist on prison reform. This idea seems to be that the institution itself should change in order to serve its visitors better.

We ought to disabuse ourselves of the idea that three of four men, such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Henry VIII are personally and solely responsible for the break with Rome. This view is sometimes fostered and reform is explained in terms of the desire to marry, or re-marry, and the will to personal power.

A score of individuals and situations had arisen in the century preceding, that were omens of things to come. The Roman Catholic Church of the high middle ages was not an independent institution, preaching and worshiping, oblivious to the social surroundings. It was part and parcel of a closed system of society, and largely responsible for the existence of such a condition. It may have considered itself final and eternal, but on every hand, the fifteenth century was the scene of discontent, unrest, activity designed to break out of something that resembled a straight-jacket covering the whole body.

The church of the late middle ages still tried to find strength in a number of decadent systems of religious life which had failed to prevent the Renaissance and yet it resisted such change on the supposition that its theological conclusions and ways of work and worship were final for all time.

Monastic life had preserved and expanded the literature of the church, but it was keeping alive moral certitude for a comparative few. If Luther's fact-finding efforts were correct, only a few, even among the monks, could pass a religious test which required the recitation of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The moral aspects of religion were not stressed as much as the dangers of the mortal sin of denying "the faith".

Public religion had been widely popularized by an age of chivalry. But knighthood was no longer in flower. It had bloomed and fall had come. In its day there was something fine about the idea, but it was not for the common man. His religion consisted in holding the horse, and boosting the rider into the saddle.

The Crusades of the twelfth century began with the sincere preaching of an able monk, Peter the Hermit. Pope Urban II made one of the great speeches of all time and fired the people with the belief that the seizure of the Holy Land from the Islamic infidel would be an act of God. He gave the campaign a more earthly aspect, from our point of view, when he offered plenary indulgence to all who would participate.

Every sin in the book was committed by the Crusaders, and the so-called Children's Crusade was worst of all. Yet, a current parochial school textbook still speaks of "the glory of the Crusades", and lists ten good results, the second of which is: "They strengthened the influence of the Church and the Popes".

The last decadent system to fall was scholasticism. Indeed, it rears its ugly head from time to time, in later generations, both within and outside the Roman Catholic Church. A closed philosophic system produced closed minds. My most revered professor once said to us, "I want to be able to meet a new situation tomorrow, even though it contradicts what I believe today." He would have been a *persona non grata* in the medieval church. Even what appears to have been a system of exchanging indulgences for a contribution to the rebuilding of St. Peter's Church in Rome, was not a subject for debate, as Martin Luther found out in 1517.

This is a sketch of the situation that produced reformers. It presupposes further knowledge of the details. The problem resolves itself into a consideration of the what and how of reform, rather than a re-opening of the question as to whether reform should have come at all. It had to come.

The renaissance in learning, the new accent on man's ability, humanism, free inquiry in scientific fashion, travel, and the discovery of new worlds, all these made the reappraisal of the church and religion inevitable. We may not be altogether happy with the details of what came to pass. But the weaknesses of the new conclusions do not cause us to ignore the many blessings which reform brought.

There was therefore, a period in church history, largely the 16th century, which we call the Reformation. The Reformed Church came out of this experience, along with numbers of other bodies which claimed to be "reformed". It is quite obvious what was being attempted. The existing church of the time was to be reformed, in order to bring it into conformity with new ideas of the New Testament church. The word conformity has been used deliberately, because each reformer, in turn, seems to have felt rather confident that such a return to a New Testament church was needed, was possible, and was only possible if his own views were put into practice.

Some of these reformers came to be called Protestants, following the formal protest of Lutheran civil powers, delivered to the Diet of Spires on April 19, 1529. This term gradually came into general use to distinguish most of the groups which disagreed with the Roman Catholic Church as to the nature and organization of the church. Others, who have disagreed with the Roman Catholic Church quite as freely as these, do not like to be called Protestants. For example, there is a constant, but reasonably good-natured quarrel within the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States as to whether the word "Protestant" should be dropped from their name. At the triennial conference in Honolulu last year, a motion to drop the word was defeated once more.

It is quite clear that the 16th century reformers considered that the church was in existence. They had no intention in withdrawing from the church. It will be well to remember this idea for in later centuries there were those who had a different approach in mind. Others came along who felt that the church had been so misinterpreted and polluted with the ideas of men that the best thing to do was

to throw them all away, re-examine the New Testament, and restore what was found there. It does not take much imagination to realize that it is usually harder to throw away, or ignore, existing social customs and ideas than it is to give up the truth, if the truth contradicts the well-established mores.

To return to the idea that the early reformers were really trying to reform the church and not to destroy it, it is helpful to observe the opening sentence of the "Confessio Augustana", of 1530:

> Inasmuch as the churches among us dissent in no articles of faith from the Holy Scriptures nor the Church Catholic, and only omit a few of certain abuses, which are novel, and which have crept in with time partly, and in part have been introduced by violence, and contrary to the purport of the Canons, we beg that your Emperial Majesty would clemently hear both what ought to be changed and what are the reasons why people ought not to be forced against their conscience to observe these abuses.

This Confession is both conciliatory toward Roman Catholicism and at the same time, exclusive toward Zwinglianism. It appeared at the time of the Diet of Augsburg. The Roman Catholics immediately presented an "Apology of the Augsburg Confession", seven times as long as the original document. There were six further exchanges before the whole matter was seen to be hopeless.

It was exactly a quarter of a century later that the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics of the Holy Roman Empire returned to Augsburg for an important settlement, which determined the course of the Lutheran Reformation. In the meantime the Emperor, Charles V, had published the "Augsburg Interim Acts", of June 30, 1548. These laws, by which the whole church was expected to be governed until final settlement, included restoration of the mass, rule of the church by the Roman clergy and the expulsion of Protestant ministers.

Opposition to the Interim Acts helped to bring about the Diet of Augsburg in 1555. This was the time when the famous settlement, "Cuius Regio, Eius Religio" was reached. This meant that the princes were to have security in the faith which they followed, be it Lutheran or Roman Catholic. It also meant that the people were actually chained to the belief of their prince. Furthermore, it meant that neither Lutheran nor Roman Catholic wished to recognize the growing Reformed movement of South Germany and Switzerland, or the various, so-called, Anabaptist groups which had arisen.

In the meantime the reform of Zurich had begun under Huldreich Zwingli. Indeed, Zwingli, like many another reformer before and since, was reluctant to give anyone credit for having shaped his thought in any way. In 1525 Erasmus wrote in his "True and False Religion":

> O, good Zwingli, why doest thou write that I have not written before thee?

Zwingli replied,

> O, that Erasmus, in his fine style, had written my books! The whole world would have been convinced, and I should not have had to suffer so much hatred.

In regard to Luther, Zwingli wrote in 1523, about his preaching at Einsiedeln that,

I began to preach the gospel of Christ in 1516, before anyone in my locality had so much as heard the name of Luther.

The complete reform of Zurich was accomplished in 1525, and it was not unlike Lutheran reform in many cities farther north, as least in several aspects. The Lord's Supper was celebrated in an evangelical way, with the use of simple Swiss German instead of Latin, in April, 1525. The service consisted of prayer, confession, the Lord's Prayer, the creed, a sermon, and benediction. The minister wore citizen's dress, and the deacons passed the elements to the communicants.

In one respect the Swiss reform went further than the Lutheran. Images, pictures, statuary, crucifixes were all removed and the bread was served on a plain wooden plate while the wine was served in wooden cups. One church in South Germany had beautiful handcarvings of the heads of saints on the end of the pews. An axe was taken to these. Centuries later the pews were still in use.

There is no denial of the Roman Catholic argument that the Reformation destroyed the unity of the organized church as it existed in the 16th century. Each reformer, in his turn, felt that the true unity had already been destroyed, or at least dissipated, so that reform was absolutely necessary.

A typical Roman Catholic view of the 16th century Reformation is depicted in cartoon form in a well-known church history book in use in parochial high schools. The reformers are portrayed as workmen on the outside of the building. Three men are on the roof; two are chopping holes in it with axes while the other is setting a torch to it. One fellow is sitting on a swinging platform chiseling a hole in the side wall. Two others have a battering ram and are charging at the foundation. The final workman is kicking the foundation on the other side without much visible result.

On the inside of the building, the Counter-Reformation is in effect. A nun has a long pole covered with a cloth and is sweeping off a large cobweb from the ceiling. A workman is on a tall ladder dusting a chandelier, while another begins painting one wall. On the floor, a man is sweeping while a woman is putting on a new coat of wax. The caption of the cartoon is "clean first the inside . . . that the outside too may be clean" (Matthew 23:26). This same book puts the purposes of the Counter-Reformation within the Roman Catholic Church in the following order: "to combat the evil effects of the Protestant Reformation, to eliminate abuses within the church, and to revive the true spirit of Catholicity".

This scene tells quite clearly the impasse between Roman Catholic and Protestant thought. The organized, hierarchical church was, and is, the New Testament Church in visible form, in the eyes of Rome. Certain traditions and decisions of councils and of popes are accepted as the only true interpretations and expansions of the simple organization of New Testament days. It is admitted that a few cobwebs gathered from time to time but cobwebs do not affect the basic structure of a building.

Protestants, on the other hand, do not view the 16th century efforts as an attempt to destroy the basic structure of the church. The cartoon would have to have a different interpretation to fit Protestant views. It might be said that

the organized Roman Catholic Church was a superstructure, built over New Testament Christianity, so that it had almost shut out the original church from public view. If the Protestants were attempting to tear down any building, it was this superstructure, not the Church. The Reformation in North Germany, in South Germany and in German speaking Switzerland, and in French-speaking Switzerland attempted a reform in doctrine which inevitably resulted in considerable change in the outward aspects of church organization, life and discipline.

Perhaps a word should be said here about the Anabaptists of the 16th century. This word itself is something of a catch-all expression, arising from the aforementioned reforming groups to designate those who were, as might be said, neither fish nor fowl. In church history the word designates all kinds of groups, from the quietist and pietistic groups like the Schwenckfelders and the Moravians, to the revolutionaries like Jan Matthys of Haarlen, Holland and Melchoir Hoffman, who claimed to be the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11:3. The followers of Menno Simons represent a more middle ground and they became the Mennonites of today.

These people were called Anabaptists, or re-baptizers, because they rejected original sin and therefore, denied the need of infant baptism. They did re-baptize adults on the basis of this belief, but of course, after the first generation had passed, the name re-baptizers would not apply to them. They all made a clean break from the state church. This was even a more radical step in reform. Where Luther, Calvin and Zwingli visualized a continuing state church which taught true doctrine and recognized correct organization, the Anabaptists believed in a complete separation of church and state in organization. There was no place left for them under the settlement of 1555 and it remained for their descendants to find the first full freedom for the expression of their views in the new world.

In order to see precisely how reformation took place, it may be of some value to examine the efforts in one particular place, in some detail. It is easy for us to look back four centuries and say that there was a division in the church in the 16th century. Just how this division took place, on a day to day basis, is not as easy to imagine. How would you make a Protestant congregation out of a Roman Catholic Church? Just how would you begin if you had to "reform" the religious organizations of the city? It is easier to find detailed treatment of the theological arguments than it is to find the answers to questions like these.

In order not to repeat more familiar material about Luther, Calvin or Zwingli, the Reformation of the city of Strasbourg may be cited as a typical example. The Reformation began there in 1518 with the preaching of Matthew Zell, in the Chapel of St. Lawrence at the Cathedral. When he began to preach from the book of Romans, three years later, the people were sure that he was in sympathy with the gospel which Luther was preaching. The fact that crowds came to hear him indicates that there was at least enough dissatisfaction with the existing religious life and teaching to bring a response to something new. Because of these crowds, the Chapter of the Cathedral forbade Zell to preach in the Cathedral pulpit. This difficulty was readily overcome when someone built a wooden pulpit which was carried out into the center of the nave whenever Zell was to preach. The bishop

asked for the dismissal of Zell in 1523, but the City Council did not wish to go that far.

Just at this time, Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito arrived in Strasbourg, in May, 1523. Bucer secured permission to preach one hour every day on the Gospel of John, and in the German language. Soon the City Council forbade this because the Nürnberg Mandate of March 6, 1523 allowed only "the Holy Gospel to be preached", and they feared attack if they disobeyed. So Bucer began to lecture to small groups in the Latin language and after a few months he began to preach from Zell's wooden pulpit.

> One of his sermons has been characterized as follows:
> A simple statement of familiar truth that a man should live for others and not himself; an assertion that the power for such a life might be gained through true belief in Christ; a combination of mystical piety and practical service such as may be heard in any Protestant Church today.

The next step in his public ministry made Martin Bucer the first evangelical minister to be installed in Strasbourg. The people of the Church of St. Aurelia voted to call Bucer as sole pastor, March 31, 1524. The Council appointed a priest to hear confessions and administer the sacraments to the members of the congregation that did not follow the reformer. Here was a congregation on its way to becoming reformed. Bucer had shown the way that a congregation might call its own pastor. Officially, members of the same congregation who wished the Roman Catholic sacraments, had them. When the new St. Peter's Church chose Capito as their pastor, August 24, 1524, the assembly officially agreed that the Council had the right to choose pastors, and to pay them. The bishop and the Pope still stood in the same relationship to the Church of Strasbourg which they had previously, but the camel had his nose under the tent.

In 1523, Bucer published a summary of his preaching. In it he gave his scriptural bases for opposing food laws, special days, the dress of the priesthood, the method of teaching exercised by the Roman Church, and what he thought would happen to those who opposed him. He also opposed the intercession of Saints, the mass, prayers for the dead, and celibacy. He favored free-will offerings, and songs and prayers in the vernacular. He closed his statement with a calm and sure challenge to his opponents:

> Finally, I am willing to face anyone and defend my preaching. If it is not in harmony with the teaching of Scripture, I am willing to be killed.

Lecturing and disputing were favorite methods of getting the issues before the people. The public liked this and clamored for even more excitement than it saw. As Bucer, Capito, Hedio and Francis Lamber, a Scotsman, lectured on the Letters of Paul, Luke, the Epistles of Peter and Jude, Isaiah, and Exodus, they taught the common people what appeared to them to be wrong with the organized Church. Thomas Murner, a priest, challenged Bucer to debate, defending the idea that the Lord's Supper is a meritorious work. Bucer gained the cheers of the crowd and defended the evangelical position so well that Murner never gained another hearing. Another challenge from Conrad Treger, put the eternal conflict between Roman Catholic and Protestant leaders into exact words. Treger said, "there must always be a Christian Church which cannot err and which man must obey in all

matters of faith". Bucer and his cohorts stood firmly on the conviction that, "the Holy Scripture is the certain truth and therefore, it must be followed". This basic disagreement has never been resolved.

The marriage of the reformers was a further step in separation. Since celibacy of the priesthood was a doctrine of the Church, no one had any right to bring it into question, it was believed. Martin Bucer was married in May, 1522 before he came to Strasbourg. Others soon followed his example. By the summer of 1524 nine other reformers had married which just about completes the list of Strasbourg reformers of that time. The chief influence of the marriage of the priests upon the question is that it challenged the power of the Bishop and the Papal Legate. They were all excommunicated March 14, 1524. The City Council kept up appearances by declaring again that nothing should be preached except the Holy Gospel and the teaching of God, but this did not say anything about the "right of the Church" to determine what this kind of teaching was.

An early issue between the new evangelical preachers and the medieval practice of the Church was that of images, by which term the Reformers meant pictures, paintings, statues, relics, and any other outward means of worship which seemed to have become an object of worship itself. Bucer brought the issue to a head by digging up St. Aurelia's grave, which had become a shrine and the object of pilgrimages. They discovered that the bones did not look at all like those of a girl. As a result, the congregation destroyed their idols, and finally the bones as well, and they destroyed all signs of the grave itself.

The mass had to go, in the new evangelical church. It was only a question of time until an evangelical service of worship would supersede it. To the untheologically-minded, who still loved the ancient and beautiful service in the Latin language, Bucer said, "let the gracefulness of the Latin language perish, let the miracle of erudition perish, if the glory of Christ is obscured by it". Following the disputation of Bern, in January, 1528, in which Bucer was acclaimed for his position regarding the mass, he returned to Strasbourg to put into practice the principles which had been agreed upon by the Council of Bern. The Magistrates did everything possible to delay the action, not because they disagreed, but because they still feared the reaction of the Emperor. The question was submitted on February 20, 1529. The vote was: 24 to keep the mass until the end of the coming Reichstag, 184 to abolish the mass now, and one against abolishing it either now or later.

The next day, Sunday, February 21, 1529 every Strasbourg church celebrated the new order; and the common people, in spite of Pope, King and Empire, had exercised their true citizenship in Christ's Kingdom by this act. Thus, Martin Bucer and his cohorts had enabled lay church members to assume a voice in their own congregations, even though it was spoken through a secular assembly. Following this eventful day, an evangelical order of worship was established and new orders of discipline and polity were effected.

Ministers were to be called by the congregation, upon recommendation of two separate committees of twelve men each. Children and youth were to be instructed and soon a catechism was written. A system of visitation was arranged whereby a

minister and two helpers visited the country churches. Song books were prepared and congregations learned to sing. There was an opportunity every week to receive the sacraments. In all this, however, the city officials reserved the right to banish a preacher who was "untrue" to the faith. A new form of the confirmation service was developed. Bucer well deserved the title of "Father of the evangelical confirmation".

What happened in Strasbourg also took place in hundreds of other localities. One of Bucer's greatest activities was in traveling to many other places to help set up reformed worship, polity and discipline. While it has only been possible to scratch the surface and to point up a few of the salient details of reform in the 16th century, further discussion must be foregone in order to bring this lecture to a close with a few conclusions.

After 15 centuries of existence, the organized church had weathered many storms on the political, theological and cultural seas. In order to do this, church members and leaders did a lot of interpretation as to the true nature of the church, on the basis of comparatively a small amount of historical evidence from the first century church. While some of these leaders were seeking personal advancement, most of them were honest and sincere. In many instances, if drastic steps had not been taken by church leaders, it is possible that the church could have been overcome by heresy or by the world.

The end result in 1500 was not something that could stand forever. No room was left for a person to find God, or even to read the word of God, apart from the organized church. The church was not the people of God; it was the hierarchy alone. The people were appendages to the organization, not germane to the very existence. Reform had to come. It did come. We share with the Roman Catholic Church the sorrow that it brought division among the Christians of the world. We have no regrets at leaving the man-made institution which assumed the title of *The* Church of Christ.

RESTORATION

There is a difference in Reformation and Restoration, especially in the minds of the Restorationists. Reformers and Restorers begin with the same basic assumption namely, that the existing church organization and doctrine of a particular generation are a departure from the true faith of New Testament times. The Reformer believes that various changes are necessary in organization and that different doctrinal interpretations are necessary. He does not consider that the church has passed out of existence or that he must start from scratch, as it were, in order to effect true organization and teaching.

The Restorationists may, or may not believe that the true church has completely disappeared. In varying degrees, some try to sweep away the existing practices and teachings which they conceive to be out of harmony with the New Testament teaching, and fully expect to find at the end of their efforts, the true church in all her pristine beauty. If we may judge rightly by the writings and practices of many Restorationists, others actually find almost nothing in the existing church or in the intervening centuries between the present and the first century, that is worth keeping. To restore the New Testament Church, apparently means to them, to pretend that nothing exists or has existed that is worthy of the original, and we must begin again from the beginning.

Lest it be thought that this is merely a generalization of various practices and ideas which could not be pinpointed in any particular place, let us hasten to say that there are many church buildings on this continent whose cornerstone bears the date "30 A.D.". This is the fruit of one Restoration movement. It is not implied that such a congregation could trace its history back through the years. What is implied however, is the fact that the years have been swept away, and the Church of the first century has been fully restored.

If one has never thought of this approach to the problem of the teaching of true religion, he may be inclined to feel that it is completely indefensible. We shall have to examine this objection in due course. It looks quite simple and quite sure to the Restorationist himself. To substantiate this statement, one such view, which was first printed in 1905, is quoted at some length:

> The Church of Christ was complete, and so passed into history with the close of the New Testament. So far as revealed to us there has been no change made since, by any authority in heaven or upon earth. Why cannot the Church of Christ be re-established everywhere now as it was then, in all its divine beauty and simplicity? Cannot Christians build now on the same foundation, having the same Lord, the same name, the same officers, chosen in the same way, observing the same ordinances in the same way, telling the penitent believers to do the same things in order to become members, requiring the church members to live now as they lived then? If this be not the Church of Christ, where can it be found? It is vain to search outside of inspired history to find the true Church of the true Redeemer.

At another place in the same book, the writer says,

> It is admitted that Christ established a Church, and that he established only one Church. What this Church is cannot be settled by discussion of the merits of any "ism" or schism, nor the intricate phases of divine truth. There have been reformers of churches and numerous reformers of reformed Churches,

but none have ever attempted to reform Christ's Church. Reforms of reforms cannot take the place of the Church of Christ which needs no reform. In the Church of Christ is concentrated the whole of Christian truth. It embraces the divine truth in concrete form. Being a divine institution all but divine authority of necessity is excluded.

It is to be noticed here that this Restorationist believes that the Church in New Testament times embraced "the divine truth in concrete form". It is somewhat popular in our time to justify our differences in doctrine and practice on the ground that there are only general principles to be found in the New Testament. Each particular Restorationist seems quite convinced that there are more than principles in the historical data of the New Testament. He finds dogma, organization, discipline, polity, the ministry and the sacraments, all set down completely. He points to this as evidence of the fact that the church in any given century can and must, teach and function precisely in every detail, as the Church of the first century did.

Perhaps no one can take a completely objective view of these matters. Insofar as it is possible, it appears that there is a point at which Reformer and Restorationist meet. This is illustrated by the individuals and groups which seem to give first importance to some one particular doctrine or practice. In other matters, such persons may appear quite like other orthodox groups or, like other more liberal groups. When it comes to their particular "pièce de resistance" however, they are pure Restorationists, in their own minds. They feel certain that this particular doctrine or practice has been discovered in the New Testament, that it has been neglected by the Church through the ages, and that only those who restore this doctrine or practice, are true Christians.

It seems to me that such practices as divine healing, the preaching of post- or pre-millennialism, and serpent handling, might well be illustrations of this point of view. There is no desire on our part to accuse people of beliefs which they do not hold. Unless we have completely misunderstood the writings and speaking of various individuals however, there are people who feel this strongly on these matters.

There is one way out of this Restorationist dilemma which is at the same time obvious and dangerous. That is to say that inasmuch as there are many Restorationists, and have been through the centuries, no one can decide which group has truly restored the New Testament Church. Therefore, the idea is rejected, and as times goes on, we become less and less sure, and less and less interested, concerning the whole problem of the possibility of the existence of the New Testament Church in our times.

To further clarify the problem, it will be well to return to some more detailed examples of the Restoration idea. Contrary to what many believe who are interested in Restorationism in our time, the idea is quite old, certainly as old as the Reformation period. In some sense, every Anabaptist or independent group in the 16th century felt that the New Testament organization of the Church was being restored when the State Church was rejected. And the revolutionaries who seized the city of Münster not only believed that they were restoring an idea; they were going to restore the New Testament Church in visible form.

As an illustration of quite a different approach to the matter, the thought of the early Tractarians in the Church of England at the beginning of the 19th century, may be cited. What might normally be called the Reformation of the Church in England had taken place nearly three centuries before the appearance of the Tractarians. As they looked back upon the experiences however, they hardly thought of them either as Reformation or Restoration.

It is true that the Tractarians looked no farther than the Nicene Creed of 325 A.D. This, of course, seemed to them to be a complete summary of the teaching necessary for the Church to be a New Testament Church. In the Nicene Creed the Tractarians saw apostolicity, catholicity, holiness and unity. Furthermore, they found these characteristics in the Church of England, or more especially in those churches which held the views that came to be known as Anglo-Catholic. It was John Keble, a great preacher of this movement who said:

> In this sense again the whole Church is Catholic, because it receives and teaches the whole of Christ's truth . . . The Catholic or Universal Church may be known by its teaching the whole creed, the whole truth of Scripture, to all without distinction of time and place.

In another sermon Keble maintained that the British churches are catholic because, "they acknowledge the catholic church, respect its authority, receive its faith and have never been cut off from it". Other writers of the times like John Henry Newman, maintained that apostolic succession is necessary in order to maintain that the Church has descended from one original, and that the unity of separate churches depends entirely upon this succession of the bishops.

The reason this illustration has been inserted here is that history ordinarily speaks of the mission of the monk, Augustine, to the British Isles at the very end of the 6th century as the entrance of the organized Church of Rome into that area. With this hypothesis, what happened in the 16th century in England had to be either a Reformation or a Restoration inasmuch as there was a definite break from Rome. However, a Tractarian like William Palmer had little use for such a view. He had no difficulty in showing that there was a Christian church in Britain before Augustine ever arrived. Therefore any connection which the Church in England had with the Church of Rome was something of an interlude. When this connection ended at the time of the Reformation, it was not a schism or heresy but simply a return to the original position held by the Church of England before Rome ever entered the picture. As Palmer put it, "The Church of England never did at any time, by any voluntary act whatever, separate herself from the communion of the Universal Church".

Time has helped to interpret the thought of the Tractarians in such a way that the Anglo-Catholic movement feels itself somewhat closer to the Church of Rome and to the Eastern Church, than it does to Protestantism, generally. This feeling is so strong in some instances that it causes writers in that school of thought to display curious signs of forgetfulness at times. For example, the actual name of the Anglican Church in the United States is "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States". However, in an article on Anglo-Catholicism, written by one of its adherents, a prominent American theological seminary professor writes in a

number of places that the "American branch is known as the 'Episcopal Church' ". Notice that he omits the word, Protestant, which is a part of its official name.

Without wishing to dwell at undue length on the question of reform in England in the 16th century, perhaps the foregoing illustrations will point out how closely interwoven the problems of Reformation and Restoration really are. In many instances, the same acts might be differently named, by different interpreters. The end result is the same.

There is a difference between those who seek to return to the New Testament alone, as a source for their thought and action, and those who may return to certain of the decisions of councils in the early centuries. The Anglo-Catholic movement would accept the decisions of Nicæa as satisfactory for the re-establishing of the Church.

To turn to an entirely different approach to the problem, let us look at the movement which is now known as Jehovahs Witnesses. In an historical statement about the movement, the current president Mr. N. H. Knorr begins, "Jehovah God is the Founder and Organizer of his witnesses on earth." After citing early "Witnesses" such as Abel, Abraham, Moses and John the Baptist, the writer refers to Christ Jesus as "the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" who takes pre-eminence among all the witnesses. Revelation 3:14 is given as the scriptural proof of this fact, the same verse that was used by Jan Mathys, already mentioned, to prove that he himself was being spoken of in the scripture.

The real key to understanding the current movement is found in the statement: "Jehovahs Witnesses of modern time are merely the last of a long line of God's earthly servants". So, we see that there is not so much of a Reformation or even a Restoration idea in the movement, but rather a reappearance of something which has existed from the time of Abel. As Mr. Knorr writes, "Jehovahs Witnesses of Modern times have not arbitrarily assumed this God-given name, but the facts concerning their activity prove it applicable to them, that they are living up to it". It is thought that the Witnesses have a particular message to the earth and, "they will continue to obey God rather than man, and the work will be accomplished despite all opposition, 'not by might, nor by power. but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of Hosts' " (Acts 5:29, 38, 39).

In this movement the idea of Restoration only goes back to the most recent link in the chain, since that connects the movement directly with Jesus Christ and the witnesses that preceded him. However, in the thinking of the group, such a Restoration has been necessary in order for Jehovah to make known his will in modern times. One of the favorite slogans, sometimes seen on the bags in which they carry their magazines for sale, is: "Christianity is the enemy of religion". This would indicate that they feel that the organized churches through the recent centuries have been a detriment to the cause of Jehovah and are especially so now in these times because they sometimes oppose the Jehovahs Witnesses through civil law. This, incidentally, only causes them to persevere the more.

It is perhaps time to turn to some more careful discussion of the movement known variously as the Disciples of Christ, the Churches of Christ, or the Christian Churches. Since these lectures are being given under the auspices of the

College of the Churches of Christ in Canada, non-members may find it exceedingly hard to imagine that the lecturer is being objective at this point. The temptation cannot be resisted to at least mention such groups as the Baptists, the Congregationalists, and the Methodists. Certainly the first two of these had many aspects of Restorationism as they found themselves cut off from the State Church because they could not any longer adhere to its demands. Seeking a new kind of church life for themselves, they were somewhat naturally forced back to the New Testament as a source of authority.

Inasmuch as the Methodist Societies felt themselves to be a continuing part of the Established Church so long as the movement remained in England, it might seem as if they do not fit into the category of Restorationism. However, without talking about it as much as some leaders of other groups, John Wesley and his cohorts certainly were consciously trying to restore the spirit and the basic teaching of the New Testament, as they understood it. They quite clearly saw in certain church laws, doctrines and practices, a departure from the New Testament and therefore, sought to restore what looked to them to be true. But we must forego further discussion of these groups and return to the Churches of Christ.

The mere fact that three different names have been suggested for these people will make it obvious that the attempt on their part to agree on the details of Restoration has been at least a partial failure, so far. They have an answer which satisfies them but which wouldn't look very conclusive to an outsider. The answer is that "Biblical names" must be used for the church, and all three of these qualify under that classification. Quite often the writings have included other possible Biblical names like "The Church of God, The Church of the First Born, etc.". As a history teacher, the speaker has waited in vain for some congregation within this group to call itself a "Church of God," to see what would happen. There are several different denominations of that name in the United States and Canada. It is our feeling that such a title would not be well received by the other congregations. Therefore, the demand for a Biblical name means today, in practice, the demand for the particular Biblical names that are now in use by the group.

Problems of Restorationism can be illustrated about as well by further discussion of the name as by any other matter. At the very outset of the movement in the United States a century and a half ago, there was trouble with the name. In 1803, Barton W. Stone, a Presbyterian minister in Bourbon County, Kentucky, along with four other Presbyterian ministers, who later deserted him, felt it necessary to withdraw from the presbytery to which they belonged. The presbytery felt about the same way about it about the same time. Stone, in particular, preferred the name Christian for the new little group. He had heard this name advocated by Rice Haggard and also by Henry Pattillo.

The public, of course, was not eager to call this new group "Christians". It called them "Stoneites" and then "New Lights" partly because they rejected the doctrine of predestination. In the South-West corner of Pennsylvania and a few miles to the west in what is now known as the Panhandle of West Virginia, Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander, began a similar movement five years later. They were Scotch-Irish Presbyterian ministers, coming directly from the North of Ireland, whereas Stone had been born in this country. By 1809, the Campbells

found themselves outside the church. Not wishing to pretend to form a church or a new church, they called their little group the Christian Association of Washington. (The Washington referred to is the county in Pennsylvania where they lived). However, they soon began a type of fellowship with the Baptist churches of the area, belonging first to the Redstone Baptist Association, and then to the Mahoning Association of Ohio, from 1823 to 1830. So, they came to be called the "Reforming Baptists" and "Christian Baptists". This, of course, was not to their liking. In his writings, the son, Alexander Campbell, who became the real leader of the movement, preferred "The Disciples of Christ' spelling the word "Disciples" either with a small letter or a capital letter, on the ground that "disciples" is more scriptural.

Before the turn of the present century, the movement was well established and identified as a separate group of Christian people. Like others before them and since, they steadfastly maintained that they were not a "denomination". They were the restored New Testament Church. They did not claim to be the "only Christians". From that time to this, the movement is most commonly referred to, on the inside circles as "the brotherhood". Those not wishing to offend people in other churches quite often use the expression "other Brotherhoods". Just how this use of the word, Brotherhood, is different for the word, Denomination, is not quite clear. Both words seem to denominate groups of people.

The differences of opinion as to what was to be restored, had led to the first division in this movement before the turn of the present century. It had been well enough to say, as had been said centuries before: "In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things charity". The difference has been to decide what the essentials are. This movement could never agree on the matter. To some, the essentials were those things specifically taught in the New Testament. This meant that nothing is permitted in the church which is not taught in the New Testament. To others, it meant that anything which is not prohibited in the New Testament is permitted if it is "decent and in order".

What therefore, should be done about instrumental music in worship, settled pastors, Sunday School organizations, printed literature, Church Boards, missionary societies, and many other matters? It has been impossible for the members of this particular Restoration movement to agree on the answers to this question.

The problem of identity, to outsiders, is perhaps more difficult in the United States than it is in Canada. For exactly fifty years, the United States census has listed "The Churches of Christ" and also "The Disciples of Christ". The former is the group which believes that the fore-mentioned matters like Sunday Schools and instrumental music are not allowed in the church. The latter have such things. The former is just as insistent about the name as it is about any of the other matters. Although the church is called by many titles in the New Testament, this group quotes Romans 16:16: "The Churches of Christ salute you", as the only name under God whereby we may be named.

The Disciples of Christ, for a long time, made no issue out of the name. Local congregations were called Christian Churches or Churches of Christ, almost universally. Some exceptions were evident, however. To make it perfectly clear

how this particular Restoration movement has broken down, even in the matter of a name for the Church, it must be said that among the Disciples of Christ the issue is discussed quite widely by some groups today. A number of "Christian Churches", feeling that their bretheren are too "liberal", are changing their names to "Church of Christ" so that they may be distinguished from them. The existing Churches of Christ, seem to have no desire for any closer fellowship with these people than they have had in the past. Furthermore, some local congregations of "liberal" persuasion also use the name Church of Christ. So the Restorationists have not been able to agree upon a name.

The Churches of Christ in Canada and the "Christian Churches" of the United States are joined together in an International Convention of the Disciples of Christ. Here you see all three names used for churches which are united. Aside from the name problem in the United States, there are many other differences which have almost divided the Church. A great number of congregations, perhaps more than 1,000, do not participate in any of the activities or fellowship of the International Convention. They are sometimes spoken of as "the independent churches". They are independent only in the sense that they are not a part of the Convention, by their own choosing. They have fellowship meetings, ministerial associations, summer conference programs, and Bible Training Schools, and join together in various kinds of home and foreign missionary work. Despite the fact that almost all of these independent churches are listed in the Year Book of the Disciples of Christ, a new Year Book made its appearance last fall which proposed to list congregations and ministers who are faithful to the "Restoration Movement". There are obviously mistakes of omission and inclusion in the new publication, but its appearance is indicative of a new trend, if not indeed a new denomination.

There is still further division of opinion among the co-operative churches regarding the transfer of membership from other churches to congregations of the Disciples of Christ (Churches of Christ). Since believers' baptism by immersion was practically the universal belief and practice, almost from the beginning of the movement, most of the congregations have always made immersion a test of fellowship and a requirement for membership. This belief has been so strong that local congregations seldom question the purpose of a person's immersion in another denomination, so long as he has been immersed. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention in the United States has a different view of the purpose of immersion than the Disciples. Hardly anyone knows what this difference is, but only a few Southern Baptist churches will accept an immersed Disciple into membership, without re-immersion. On the side of the Disciples, however, we know no record of the immersion of a Southern Baptist being questioned. The stress is laid on the form, not the purpose of the act.

On the other hand, hundreds of congregations now accept a transfer member regardless of the church from which he comes, if he is satisfied with the baptism which he received in that church. These churches are called "open-membership churches". So far, those which might be called "closed-membership churches" have fellowship with open-membership churches in the same city, state and wider organizations. This open-membership issue is however, in all probability, one of the chief reasons for the existence of the "independent" churches which have been characterized here.

Lest it be thought that the Churches of Christ in the United States, the non-organ, non-missionary society churches, have succeeded in restoring the Church, while their historical brethren continue to split, it must be said, but not joyfully, that they are having their troubles, too. In the city of Louisville, for example, there are at least 36 of these churches. In the Saturday newspaper, announcing their Sunday services, they are divided into two boxes. At the bottom of one box, listing 20 church services, is this statement: "These churches advocate a scriptural eldership for every congregation and reject the false doctrine of premillennialism". The other group of 16 churches is headed with a statement in quotation marks: "Preaching the Blood, the Book, and the Blessed Hope". At the bottom of their list, the churches speak of themselves as the INDEPENDENT churches.

Of all the church groups which have consciously tried to restore the New Testament Church, none has used the title "The Restoration Movement" as much as have these descendents of the Campbell and Stone movements of the early 19th century. Likewise, no other group has been any more lacking in success, if success is to be measured by the unity of the Restoration Movement. When at least five groups have appeared (and still more and finer distinctions could have been mentioned), certainly success is not the word with which to characterize the results.

In varying degrees, each group feels that it has had some measure of success. A good illustration comes to mind regarding a feature article in a popular weekly magazine of October 24, 1955. The cover article regarded a young farmer in Tennessee. It was stated that he was a member of the Church of Christ and a footnote said, "also known as Campbellites". The predestined letters to the editor appeared a few weeks later. One said that "this church was in existence over 1,500 years before Thomas and Alexander Campbell were born". Again and again, history repeats itself.

It is not without a sense of sorrow and of sin that the foregoing history has been revealed in surroundings like these. My own childhood was spent in the non-organ, non-organization Church and my father was an elder in it. We were country people and this was our neighborhood church. Today I do not agree with the doctrines and practices of this group in many details. This is why it is impossible for me to believe that only right doctrine produces good, Christian lives. I remember my parents and their neighbors too well for that. As a young factory worker in Chicago, I became associated with churches which would now be called the "independent churches" in the United States. I do not think that they have restored nearly as much as they imagine. Their unwillingness to fellowship with those of differing beliefs in the Brotherhood seems to me to be wrong. But good and fruitful lives have been produced in these churches also.

The churches represented by the seminary in which I teach and by the College of the Churches of Christ in Canada are perfect, neither in doctrine nor in practice. They do stand in such a relationship to the total church in the world as to make it possible for them to have a greater part in the coming great church than any of their erstwhile brethren, in our opinion.

This brings us close to the beginning of the final lecture. This is the time to say that Restoration was only one of the great ideas that possessed the founders of this movement in the beginning. The other great idea was the unity of the church. The thought of the early leaders crystalized quite clearly. The Church of Christ on earth is one. The existing churches are divided. This must not be. How can they be reunited? The answer was, Restoration. If the New Testament Church could be restored in its original doctrine, discipline, and polity, then the whole church world could unite in this Restored Church.

Some of the churches crystalized their thinking and formed an organization around it. They sincerely believed, and do believe, that the New Testament Church has been restored completely. Therefore, the first part of the task is finished. The second would be easy to accomplish – let the rest of the people who claim to be Christian come into the Restored Church.

Other churches have become conscious of history like that which has been portrayed in this lecture. Reform and Restoration have not been confined to one group or one century. Everyone is interested, even the Roman Catholic Church, to some degree. The task of the present-day Church is quite different from what it is believed to be, by those who think that the Church has been truly, completely, once and for all, restored by themselves. It is a much wider and more intricate task. It is too large for any one group. There are issues in the matter which have never been seen by the Restorationists. Fortunately, in the 20th century, the problem of the oneness of the Church has been attacked from new angles. With this approach we will be concerned in the final lecture.

RENEWAL

"Is there a thing of which it is said, 'see, this is new?' It has been already in the ages before us" (Ecclesiastes 1:10), thus wrote the Preacher centuries before our era. When anyone suggests new approaches to the problem of church unity or asks for a reappraisal of current conditions, he is apt to be met with the charge that he is attempting to substitute something new when nothing new is needed. The church has existed from the beginning and her nature is not open to question. Reformers are likely to feel that such earthly trappings as had been hung on to the church were removed four centuries ago. Restorers, each in turn, are likely to maintain that there is indeed nothing new under the sun, and to point to their restoration as an exact reproduction of the original.

We cannot dismiss the efforts of these movements lightly. They have been led by devoted people, and many careful scholars have labored in their behalf. However, this is one point at which the pragmatic test may well be applied, although it is often a dangerous tool in the hands of people in a hurry. It has to be said that no Reformer and no Restorationist has achieved his goal. Partial truths have been proclaimed, and much error has been eradicated. Surely, if any one person or group now represents the whole church in perfect form, the rest of the Christian world would not be so insistent on pursuing its own heretical pathways, that it would fail to recognize the truth within its midst.

Like a sailboat speeding toward the shoals, it is time to change our track. The *status quo*, "that's Latin for the fix we's in", to quote a fictional character, is not good enough. What we now possess, in the broken and divided churches, is not worthy of Christ's church.

What is the picture? The revised and enlarged edition of the *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, which is off the press this month, includes 266 denominations. It is true that some 98% of the total church membership is found in 77 of the largest bodies, and that the large majority of these are found in a dozen so-called church families. Even this is not very encouraging when we note that there are 27 separate Baptist bodies and 22 Methodist bodies listed. One shudders to think how many divisions there really are, when he thinks of the eternal struggles within denominations which are outwardly united.

The current ecumenical movement, just about as old as the century, provides us with the setting for a discussion of the renewal of the church. Renewal is something different from Reform, and it has more in common with Restoration probably. It has an advantage over former Restoration movements in that it is a co-operative adventure on the part of people of many beliefs, and it differs considerably from other Restoration efforts in the concept of what is to be restored.

It is to be expected that such a movement would find opposition. Those who resent the idea of a common search for truth first expound their own individual positions with greater force. One of the most amazing events of the century however, has been the formation of at least two interdenominational organizations, composed of independent churches, some whole denominations, and some individuals, for the chief purpose of combatting the ecumenical movement. Some churches that felt that they had completely restored the Church of the New

Testament, have been willing to soft-pedal particular favorite beliefs, in order to unite with others on such doctrines as they do hold in common. This negative result of the ecumenical movement may be one of its more fruitful results in the days to come.

Internally, the results of the ecumenical movement have been amazing. One has only to attend a world gathering of delegates and observe the dress of the various clergy to feel that surely the hand of God must have been moving, in order to get such people to come together in one room for any purpose.

The choice of the word "ecumenical" has been a fortunate one. The Latin word "Catholic" means essentially the same thing as this word which has a Greek root, but generally speaking, the world thinks "Roman Catholic" when only the word "Catholic" is spoken. Furthermore, many of the Orthodox Churches are in fellowship with the ecumenical movement, and the Greek-rooted word is a common one with them. It comes from the word for "house". Therefore, if we may coin an English word, to be "ecumenized", means "to be housed together, spiritually". Even though we leave all of the doors of the house open when we enter with other people, so that we can get out quickly if the fear of contamination seizes us, we have learned to do several things together, in the name of our common Lord.

Following a number of efforts on the part of individual Christians, and a few Christian organizations, probably the first outstanding world organization was the International Missionary Council. The attempt to fulfill the Great Commission on the part of so many and so varied denominations has become increasingly embarrassing. Say what we will, there is something wrong with establishing a Dutch Reformed Church of North America in South China, or a Southern Baptist Church in North India. As representatives of the younger churches were quick to point out at one conference, "denominationalism is an American luxury which we cannot afford". From the second Missionary Conference at Jerusalem came the famous slogan: "We are agreed to differ, we are united to serve, we are resolved to love".

This is perhaps as far as a co-operative missionary organization can go. The Life and Work movement came into existence on the supposition that there were further things that the churches could discuss and do together, in spite of their differences. Indeed, it was generally agreed and assumed that there would be no theological discussion in Life and Work meetings. The first gathering at Lausanne in 1925, proved the fallacy of this supposition. In due season, the Faith and Order movement was born. For 10 years the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches operated as a result of the union of these two movements. Finally, at Amsterdam in 1948, the World Council of Churches was born. Knowing full well the obstacles which lay in the way, representatives of 151 churches in the world from 41 countries in the world, showed their divine discontent with the existing situation and set themselves under God to see what He could do with them together.

There are some things which the member churches of the World Council of Churches are not seeking. Even though the opponents shout it from the house

tops, we are not seeking to build a "Super-Church". If even two people seek to do something together, there has to be a certain amount of organization, if their work is to be effective. Two men do not carry a pole by trying to lift the same end. As soon as delegates to the World Council divided themselves into working committees, and chose certain members as presidents, the cry of "Super-Church" arose. The loudest of these came from the very same gentleman who arrived in Amsterdam somewhat ahead of the World Council delegates, and persuaded several newsmen that the little group of people whom he was organizing into an International Council, was really the thing that they were there to report.

If anyone still thinks that delegates to a World Council meeting want, and have, a super-organization, he need only to attend a session or two. He will discover that no one desires to lord it over another, and furthermore, that it would be utterly impossible for him to do so. So, super-organization is not an end.

Secondly, some have thought that World Council members are seeking an organic unity on the basis of the lowest common denominator. That is to say, everyone is expected to give up everything that he possibly can, hoping that a *sine qua non* may be reached, upon which all may agree. Again, if a critic were to attend a few sessions, he would discover that nothing is ever said along this line. Organic union is so far away that delegates realize there is much more fruitful work for them to do at the present time. Indeed, it might sometimes appear that there is an over-abundance of friendliness so that we fail to discuss our theological differences as much as we should, lest we offend someone. It almost seems that everyone brings his own baggage and takes every single bit of his own possessions home with him when he leaves.

What have we been able to accomplish, on the positive side, in the ecumenical movement? In the first place, it has afforded a common meeting ground, so that we can really come to know each other. After two Life and Work Conferences, three Faith and Order Conferences and two General Assemblies of the World Council of Churches, there really is no excuse for any one church to misrepresent the doctrines and practices of another. As a matter of fact, at the Lund Conference, it was agreed at the outset that our beliefs would not be discussed, inasmuch as we already knew where everyone stood. The first sessions were not finished however, before it was realized that we did not actually understand each other and furthermore, we wanted to put in a few good words for our side, even if they had already been said before.

There is something very good about the exchange of statements of faith. Many churches feel that they have a "distinctive witness", which is in addition to the general body of faith that most churches hold. Quite often this is the case, and it has been good to hear these respective "distinctive witnesses". If one is honest, and he comes only with a single "distinctive witness", he is put to shame when he finds out how much the Scriptures teach to which he has been turning a deaf ear.

On the other hand there have been some bad features in this sharing of witness. Where it has done some churches good to be able to state their faith in public, others have discovered that they had differences which they did not realize. After the differences came out, they felt somewhat duty bound to defend

them, and the result was that they were farther apart than they were before the sessions began. In due time, such belligerent defense of one's uniqueness gives way to a more humble reliance upon both one's own witness and that which he has heard from others.

Perhaps the greatest revelation that has come out of world discussions has been the fact that we do not know precisely what kind of unity we are seeking. This fact has caused the American member churches of the World Council of Churches to call a conference for September, 1957, in Oberlin, Ohio, to discuss the theme: "What Is the Nature of the Unity We Seek?" Some of the friendliest and most cordial delegates at the world gatherings have been quite frank to say that at the present time, they can see nothing except a unity of conformity. As an illustration of this we may quote from the address of Professor Basil Ioannides, to the accredited visitors in Evanston, August 8, 1954. Here are some excerpts from that address:

> There are many who claim that all existing Christian communions are imperfect and that we should not draw our ideal from any of them, but only from the Church of the New Testament times. . . . The Eastern Orthodox Church completely rejects such a viewpoint and holds the view first that the *una sancta,* the one Catholic and Apostolic Church has never disappeared, and secondly, that our meeting place must be the life and faith of the one, ancient and undivided Church of the first nine centuries of the Church's history. . . . The Orthodox Church is the *una sancta,* for she has preserved unchanged the apostolic faith and the apostolic tradition as the apostles handed it down to the Church. . . . Each Christian Church of today, if she wishes to have a place in the fullness and wholeness of the life of the *una sancta,* must be true to the faith and life which has been handed down to all of us from the ancient church of the great fathers and councils.

Professor Ioannides further bolstered his position by quoting from Professor Nicholas Berdyæv, of the Orthodox faculty in Paris, "If the *una sancta* has not always existed, if its origin does not go back to Jesus Christ, this means that it will never exist".

A similar illustration from another direction may be cited, together with a response to it which certainly has never appeared in print. At the Lund Conference on Faith and Order, Dr. Leonard Hodgson, of the Church of England, and theological secretary of the Conference, made a very helpful opening statement. In the course of his discussion he had to deal with the basic question as to whether the Church is "given" or whether it is a "covenant relationship". Speaking of organic unity, he quoted Dr. Frederick W. Dillistone, the eminent Anglican theologian. Here are Dr. Hodgson's exact words:

> If it is important to remember that organic is the adjective of organism, it is equally important to observe, as Dr. Dillistone has reminded us, that the root of our word federation is the Latin *foedus* – covenant. Is it absolutely certain that a covenant relationship between distinct churches, if in it there were realized to the full all the deep implications of the word covenant, might not bind them together into the organic unity of the body of Christ?

If you are somewhat surprised to hear this comment from an Anglican, you are probably not nearly as surprised as Professor A. M. Ramsey, Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge, later the Bishop of Durham, and now to be

consecrated Archbishop of York, was when he heard it. Following the plenary session, the various sections took up their work. In our section, as soon as possible, Professor Ramsey took the floor and spoke these exact words: "I have heard many things in ecumenical circles that have shocked me. But the only thing that ever shocked me to the very marrow of my being was what Hodgson said about covenant, derived from Dillistone!" Now the Archbishop of York, like Professor Ioannides and many others is as kind and cordial as they come. But at the present time, apparently he sees no way to bridge the great gulf between two opposing points of view. The Church has a certain nature; one's own church has continued to present the Church in this full nature. Union could come about in only one way. That way is obvious.

At Lund, on another occasion, Professor R. D. Hartford of the Church of Ireland, Archbishop King's Professor of Divinity, Dublin University, said in our section, with a smile on his face, "why don't you all come back into the Church, and then we will make a place for your varied witness"? The smile was typical of the wonderful spirit which is his, but the words were typical of his best thought on the subject. Must we go to the New Testament or to Nicæa, or only to Lambeth for the source of our unity?

Can there be unity of diversity? It is surely true that if we have any unity at all at the present time it is one of diversity. The theme of the Faith and Order section at Evanston was stated as a paradox, when it was chosen at Lund two years earlier, but there may be truth in it. "Our Oneness in Christ and our Disunity as Churches" may be a simple statement of fact. The first impulse is to say that inasmuch as there is a disunity among the churches, then there could be no unity in Christ, for neither he nor his Church are divided.

At the Lund Conference a small group of delegates asked permission to retire from their section and to go apart as individual Christians rather than as representatives of particular churches, to see what they could discover through a common search. The results were the most talked of matter in the whole Conference. A Bishop of the Church of Sweden (Lutheran), a professor of The Church of Scotland (Presbyterian), and others equally different, came up with the suggestion that further discussion must cease to follow the path of ecclesiology and approach the problem of unity from a Christological discussion. For, they said,

> In Him we have an objective unity which cannot be invalidated by anything we do in our actual practices. A Church that lives out of communion with another Church is taking upon itself a dreadful responsibility, for it is saying in effect to its sister Church: "you are not founded upon Christ".

What we have to say is, that the disunity that exists is a disunity on the human side of the Church. We do have an objective unity in Jesus Christ, and his Church is one. To say that we are divided is to say that each of us, in turn, do possess the one Church, in some manner or in some part. Therefore, all those who possess the Church of Christ, or are in the Church of Christ, are one, in that degree, even though they persist in keeping themselves separated on human terms which they misunderstand to be divine commands.

There are others who feel that neither conformity or diversity is the pathway to follow at the present time, but that a minimum confession of faith is practical.

As you know, the preamble of the World Council of Churches' Constitution contains the only doctrinal phrase in the document – "Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour". This does give us some kind of oneness, if we can say this together. We have managed to quarrel about it however, some preferring the phrase, "Lord and Saviour", so that the word "Lord" can be variously interpreted. It was the Rev. Professor V. E. Devadutt, President of the Baptist Union of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, who said at Evanston, to the accredited visitors:

> Let us not deceive ourselves that a confession of a minimum of common faith that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Saviour expresses all that is needed for the unity of faith. The Koinonia of the believers is made to suffer a reduction and to that extent the unity of the faith is disrupted, but this Koinonia cannot be experienced, whenever a body of believers come together, through a common participation in a common eucharist for those who are set aside for the preaching of the Word do not have the sanction to exercise their God-given ministry before all believers alike.

In an address before a plenary session at Evanston, Professor Devadutt continued this theme, while discussing the Church of South India. He said,

> I have found in my travels both in the East and in the West that there are even at this late day certain confusions with regard to the movement for church union. The first confusion is that serious divisions are complacently indentified with a desirable diversity. Our divisions that limit the field within which an ordained minister can exercise his God-given vocation of the Christian ministry, that make us practice closed communion services, are not, in God's name, an expression of diversity. They are divisions that deny the unity of the faith.

Devadutt also warned however, that those who practice open communion must not be guilty of self-righteousness. It could be that we regard the meaning of the Lord's Supper as of so little consequence that we do not care to guard it or to see that it is observed correctly. We admit that this is a pitfall that must be avoided.

This discussion leads to the impasse to which we have come. We cannot decide what to do about the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In order to avoid complete misunderstanding, it has been decided that conferences and assemblies do not and will not observe a communion service. The chief reason given is that most of the member churches feel that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament, to be observed by a church. Inasmuch as a group of delegates representing churches cannot in any sense be called an organized church, therefore, they have no proper authority for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Something is done which comes fairly close to a conference communion service. A local church in Amsterdam, Lund, or Evanston celebrates the Lord's Supper, on a limited, open-communion basis. Technically, it is not always called that but it is possible for any delegate present to commune, if his own conscience and the laws of his own church permit it. Individual delegates from the same church sometimes disagree as to whether they should commune.

The real crux of the matter is to be found in the varying concepts of the nature of the ministry. As Canon Oliver Tompkins, of Lincoln, wrote in 1949, most of the ecumenical discussions are carried on by ministers and they always break down at the question of the nature of the ministry. He said further that laymen, looking on, may feel that the ministers have a "vested interest" in the

outcome of the discussion. This was said in jest, for one cannot discredit the sincerity of the clergy who discuss the nature of their office in these ecumenical gatherings.

The Church of South India, when it was organized, recognized the ministry of all the bodies which were uniting. This has been called by one, "a dangerous experiment". It has caused some Anglo-Catholics in England to refuse communion and ministration to former Anglicans who are now members of the Church of South India.

No one apparently sees the way clearly enough to be able to convince everyone else of the way he suggests. For my part, I see the Lord's Supper as indeed the supper of the Lord. It was the Lord who first invited the apostles to participate in the last supper, and he has never ceased to invite his followers to his table since that time. If this is true, then it is not the place of any particular church organization to invite or to debar, nor to set up human standards under the guise of divine guidance, in order to protect the sacrament. Likewise, no particular kind of organization is necessary in order for a person to be the celebrant at the communion service. Various churches have decided that various kinds of chosen people are suitable to perform this function. While refusing the validity of such views, we realize that the ceremony ought to be worshipful and orderly. It carries its own meanings, and no words quoted, no titles held by the leader, no rules as to who should be permitted to commune, will effect its meaning. This, of course, is not a very widely accepted view. It is presented humbly.

The churches feel that when they ordain a man to the ministry he has been called of God. He is ordained according to the rites and rituals of the various groups. If we could only discover those whom God really calls, regardless of what we think about it, and then recognize a mutual ministry, on the basis of a call of God, then we would be making some progress. I do not see the slightest way in which we could arrive at any conclusion on this matter at present.

What about the renewal of the Church, the title given to this lecture? It may seem as if the discussion thus far has been concerned only with vast gulfs which can never be bridged. The discussions of this generation have been all to the good. We know our differences, we know our likenesses. We know how our hearts long for a restoration of the oneness of the Church while at the same time we cling to the respective faiths of our fathers. But we do not despair. Surely Christ has had enough effect upon us to keep us from an eternal divergence that knows no end. He surely loves each of us, and there is no questioning the sincere love of the various Christian people for him. Somewhere, somehow our human interpretations have temporarily overcome the situation. What we need is not so much a Reformation of existing reforms, or a restoration of our own idealized concept of the Church in some former century, even though it be the first, but rather a renewal of such wholeness as existed in the primitive Church.

We need to place ourselves in the hands of God more fully. Those who have been working in the ecumenical movement realize this. Outsiders may believe that we have been busy trying to formulate constitutions and by-laws so that we can include and exclude at will, in the coming united church. Nothing could be

farther from the truth. The first requisite for any renewal of the Church in its primitive nature, is for churches and Christians to let their wills become attuned to the will of God. Then, whatever is accomplished, will not be our doing but His. And we can be sure that He will do a better job of it than we have done.

The diversity of the nature of the Church in New Testament times ought not to cause any great problem. Those who look for, and find a "blueprint" in the New Testament will continue to do so. At the same time, they will continue to hold asunder, the body of Christ. For no two groups find the same blueprint. A blueprint is something from which an exact copy can be made, in every last detail. The builder does not construct his blueprint as he goes along. He receives it at the hands of the architect. Then he duplicates the blueprint in brick, wood and stone.

In the case of New Testament blueprints, the builders first go through the Scriptures and construct their own blueprint. If they find the Church at Antioch and the Church at Jerusalem disagreeing as to how much of the Jewish law must be kept, these modern builders of the Church decide arbitrarily, how much of one historical account to take and how much of another. So, their blueprint grows.

There was a wholeness to the New Testament Church, despite Jewish and Gentile wranglings, despite the party spirit in Corinth and despite the influence of Greek philosophy. It is this wholeness, that must be renewed. The most positive thing we can do is to assert the fact. Twenty-five years ago it was pointed out by Hoskyn and Davey in their book, *The Riddle of the New Testament*, that if we deny the wholeness of the Church we are actually denying Christ.

This wholeness will not be renewed by taking a part of this church and a part of that one and trying to put the pieces together like a jig saw puzzle. No church body can honestly admit to itself that it has only a part or a piece of the whole Church at the present time. Everyone has to feel that it has, and that it is, the whole Church, and, as Canon Tomkins once pointed out, all must feel that they have more than "valuable helps" to give to the world.

It might not be amiss to refer here to the parable of the leaven. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump". If one were to divide the bread dough into a thousand pieces, the nature of the yeast is to be found in each piece of dough. Hoping that this illustration is of more value than disvalue, we point out that if Christ is present in any church in any sense, then he is wholly present there. For Christ is not divided.

One of the finest things that can be done in our time toward a renewal of the Church is for each church to recognize Christ in the other. The forms of worship and the doctrines may be strange, but if it is a church, in the true sense of the word, then Christ is there. We disagree with each others' doctrines and practices, but there are few of us surely, who will state categorically and emphatically, that the other churches simply are 100% wrong. And if a church is 1% right, then the whole Christ, not just part of Him, is in that 1%. For this thought I have been indebted to Oliver Tomkins and his little book, *The Wholeness of the Church*, first published in January, 1949. It is easy to agree with Mr. Tomkins that this is an idea which is very difficult but I find it a most fruitful one for exploration.

What can we do? It is my belief and my practice, that the doing of as many things together as possible is actually a pathway toward unity. We must take care lest we mistake cooperative ventures of various sorts for Christian unity. Likewise, we need to avoid the feeling that we simply must have unity for practical reasons. For example, some speakers and writers try to scare churches into co-operation and future unity by telling them what may happen to them and their country if they stay separated while secularism, communism, or some other evil, unites and devours them. The historical prognostication might be true, but the demand for a renewal of the wholeness of the Church is much more than a practical problem, based on fear.

We can work together. To mention only one of the many work activities which have been carried on by Christians through the World Council of Churches, may I refer to the work camp program. A few hundred such camps have been held since the end of World War II. At the invitation of the World Council, it was my privilege to direct such a camp in Germany in 1950. The 50 young people under my care came from 11 countries, and from more than a dozen confessions. They had nothing in common actually, except Jesus Christ. He was enough. He made a unity out of the group, starting from the fact that you can work with a pick and shovel, regardless of your creed, language, nationality or sex.

We can worship. A generation of conferences on the student and adult level have proven this fact. It was said that the Archbishop of Canterbury attended the communion service in Amsterdam, and remained on his knees throughout the whole service, even though he could not partake of the elements. Such worship is a tremendous witness. At Chateau de Bossey in Switzerland, a graduate school of ecumenical study is in its fourth year. In the first year, when I was a visiting professor there, several students felt that they could not worship with one another. This was especially true of the Eastern Orthodox students. Finally, one of them agreed to lead prayers, if only the Orthodox and a member of the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands lead the responses, while the rest of us sat in silence. This was a real venture of faith on the part of that student and it was a vital experience for us all.

We can engage in welfare work. The CARE package program which began immediately after the Second World War, and the present activities carried on under the auspices of the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches, have been tremendous. Truly, the demands of Jesus have been met in these cases. While we work together to save the lives of others, we have grown closer together whether we wanted to or not.

Co-operation is not unity and many feel that it will never bring us to unity. I cannot help but feel that it helps, and it is a part of the renewal experience which is at hand. If I may refer to another Orthodox student at Bossey, one said to me one day, "Professor, you think that our good fellowship together here in this co-operative venture is a pathway to unity, don't you?" I replied that I did indeed feel that the more we knew each other, the more we appreciated the Christian love and devotion of others, the closer we were coming together. He replied, with a

shake of his finger: "It has nothing to do with it. I like you. You are a fine fellow. But you are a heretic!"

No less a person than Bishop Stephen Neill, of the Anglican Church and the World Council of Churches voiced the same sentiment in an address last summer at Swanick, England, before a Conference of the Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland. Said Bishop Neill, "We must guard against the illusion that the growth of co-operation and the multiplication of the organs of co-operation will of themselves lead us a step nearer to unity . . . (fortunately, he continues) . . . and yet one of its by-products is a tendency toward unity . . . The Church of South India would never have become a reality if in the long course of the negotiations the leaders of all the churches had not become firm friends".

The reunion of many bodies of Christians in our time is an indication of what can be done, and I do not see how it can be imagined that our common Lord would disapprove. The United Church of Canada, the Church of South India, the reunion of three Methodist bodies in the United States are a few indications of what can be done, within the whole body of the church.

Reformation was not enough, for it was an attempt to re-make that which was already too great a departure from the nature of the one church, and the reformed churches tended to mutual exclusiveness. Restoration attempts have been futile for they assumed that they were not a part of the church in history and that they could ignore their own past. Therefore, they have succeeded only in further dividing the Church of Christ.

It is time to try the renewal of the wholeness of the church through mutual prayer, thought and action, that the one Church of Jesus Christ might have full expression upon the earth, in visible form.